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ABSTRACT

A practicum was developed which implemented various strategies to increase consistently below average reading comprehension scores of eighth-grade students. A targeted group of 16 students with middle ranking stanine scores was selected. Objectives included raising reading comprehension scores using task specific strategies, developing a more positive attitude toward reading, and utilizing higher order questioning strategies to increase cognitive skills. Although the targeted students did not show the expected increase in reading comprehension scores, 88% did show some degree of increase. Posttest scores also indicated that overall attitude toward reading was more positive, motivation to read increased, skill in determining the meaning of unknown words through contextual analysis improved, and participation in class discussion utilizing higher order questioning strategies increased. Findings suggest that the utilization of test wiseness strategies could facilitate an increase in comprehension scores on standardized achievement tests. (Twenty-seven references, standardized test results, pre- and posttest instruments, the reading attitude survey, a blank individual reading log, a cloze test, a teacher tally sheet for higher level cognitive thinking, and tables of test results are attached.) (Author/RS)

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UTILIZING TEST WISENESS TO IMPROVE TEST SCORES IN READING FOR EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS

by

Sandra L. Chance

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

July/1992

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Abstract

Utilizing Test Wiseness to Improve Test Scores in Reading for Eighth Grade Students.
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This report describes various strategies which were implemented to increase consistently below average reading comprehension scores of eighth grade students. A targeted group of 16 students with middle ranking stanine scores was selected for this process. The objectives included raising reading comprehension scores using task specific strategies, developing a more positive attitude toward reading, and utilizing higher order questioning strategies to increase cognitive skills.

Although the targeted students did not show the expected increase in reading comprehension scores, 88 percent did show some degree of increase. Post test scores also indicated that overall attitude toward reading was more positive, motivation to read increased, skill in determining the meaning of unknown words through contextual analysis improved, and participation in class discussion utilizing higher order questioning strategies increased. It was concluded that the utilization of test wiseness strategies could facilitate an increase in comprehension scores on standardized achievement tests. Appendices include testing instruments, student data, and graphic analysis of progress.

Authorship Statement/Document Release

Authorship Statement

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

The setting for this practicum was a small agricultural town in South Florida. The area has provided for much of the fruit and vegetables enjoyed over much of the eastern United States. There were, according to the United States Department of Commerce Census of Agriculture, at least 18 different traditional vegetables commercially grown with an estimated value of $267 million. Approximately 98 percent of this was shipped out of the country.

The area's economy also has relied on a nearby United States Air Force base. The area has grown rapidly due to several factors: A major sports facility was built, a branch of a well-known junior college was opened, major residential development took place, and the downtown area and several shopping centers were renovated. These factors were the reasons why the Vision Council Incorporated expected this area's population to double by the year 2000. The Vision Council is an economic development company for the county in which this practicum site was located. According to the Vision Council's 1989 annual report,

the projected total population for 1992 was 35,533. The average household size was 2.9, and the average median household income was $25,376.

Many ethnicities have called South Florida home. In this multi-ethnic melting pot, the cultures which have usually been considered to be minorities in society have found themselves to be in the majority. Approximately 70 percent of the community was African-American, Cuban-American, Mexican-American, or of some other Hispanic descent. Thirty percent of the population was Anglo-Saxon.

The student body at this practicum site was reflective of its community ethnicities. According to the most recent 1989-90 annual school report, 81 percent of the 1,175 students were composed of minorities (Appendix A:43).

The faculty consisted of 60 percent African-American and Hispanic, and 40 percent Anglo-Saxon. Twenty-seven percent held masters degrees, two percent held specialists degrees, and two percent held doctorate degrees. The percentage of beginning teachers was 9.1 percent. The average years teaching experience was seven years. One principal and two assistant principals were assigned to this site.

This 25 acre site was established in 1976. It included a two story self-contained structure with no

portables and few windows. The pupil to teacher ratio in the regular program was 23:1. Various other programs were designed to meet the needs of the middle school student through sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.

The Student-Teacher Progression Program (STP) was in its third year of implementation. This program allowed teachers to remain with the same group of students for the three consecutive years of middle school. This program allowed for optimum student productivity by establishing long range positive relationships.

The middle school teaming concept was in its fourth year of implementation at this site. Each grade level was divided into two separate teams. A student was assigned to a team upon entrance into the school. Each team was given a certain area of the school designated for classrooms, team mural, and team bulletin board. Each team developed a name, identifying colors, a logo, and a motto. Various activities were used to promote unity and make the journey through adolescence as enjoyable and enriched as possible. Through teaming, interdisciplinary units were taught, which allowed the student to learn about a broad concept in each class.

Mainstreaming allowed special education students the opportunity to interact with "regular" students in elective classes.

The writer has worked at this school for five years and was a language arts teacher for four regular classes as well as an advanced class. As team leader of 153 students following the STP process, the writer was currently engaged in the third continuous year of instructing these students.

The setting for this practicum took place in a carpeted classroom located on the second floor of the north side of the building. There was a long, narrow, heavily frosted window which let some light in at the front of the room. The room was well lighted by florescent lights. Half of the eastern wall was a sliding partition leading to a seventh grade social studies classroom. The molded individual desks were arranged in rows of four. Four rows of four desks were facing north, and four rows of four desks were facing west. There was a round table in the middle of the room at which the teacher interacted with small groups and gave individual attention when necessary. Each class was held for a period of 49 minutes. The room was air-conditioned, but the teacher had no control over the thermostat. There were times in which the room was too cold or too warm for comfort.

Problem Statement

Tests have confronted our students at every level of education. Some students have thrived and did very well on tests; others have panicked. The ones who panicked were so stressed by tests that performance level was substantially below the capability level. Test anxiety can be overcome though, and students can be taught how to perform better on exams.

At the practicum site, reading comprehension scores had been consistently lower than the national median of the 50th percentile (Appendix B:45). According to the SAT scores of 1989-1990, 40 percent of the school's student body scored a percentile of three or four (Appendix C:47). Through observation of the same group of students during the past two and a half years, it was noted through direct observation that these students had difficulty answering questions above the lower order of Bloom's taxonomy.

Because of the multi-cultural population at this site, many of the students had a poor vocabulary in the English language. This, of course, made it hard for them to understand what they read and what they were asked to do with the material they read.

Many of these students had come from a nearby migrant labor camp and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Lack of adequate role models coupled with the lack of

books at home contributed to the factors why these students experienced difficulty with comprehension. In order to improve, one must practice. These students had not read enough recreationally.

In order for all members of society to develop to full potential, critical thinking skills must be developed and nurtured. Too often, teachers have read material to students instead of allowing silent or oral reading in the class. Because teachers have been pushed to cover a certain amount of material in the curriculum, lower order questions in the form of multiple choice, true or false, and matching have usually been asked. This also made grading simpler and quicker. However, our students must be taught to use higher order thinking skills.

Students should be taught to look at whole thoughts. Too many times students have been "word calling" instead of understanding concepts or ideas. More advanced organizational skills should be learned such as looking for main ideas, drawing conclusions, and reading the questions before reading the passage.

Reading comprehension has always been the basis for success in school. Every subject has utilized comprehension skills in the curriculum. It was evident that these skills need to be taught and practiced at this practicum site.

Students are categorized on standardized achievement tests according to a stanine level. Those students with stanine levels of 7, 8, or 9 were considered above average, and levels of 4, 5, or 6 were considered average. Students with 1, 2, or 3 stanine levels were classified as below average.

Too often, students in the "forgotten middle" have been overlooked by teachers. Emphasis in the classroom was usually placed on either the lower or the higher achieving student. For this reason, the writer chose to focus on a simple random sample of 16 students with stanines of 3, 4, 5, and 6 chosen from a regular eighth grade language arts class (Appendix D:49).

These students' reading comprehension scores on the 1990-91 Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) were near or below the national median. These students consisted of nine males and seven females who came generally from a lower to middle class background. To protect the privacy of each student, each member of the target group was assigned a number.

This practicum attempted to increase future reading comprehension scores through the application of applying critical thinking skills, test taking strategies, and used various methods to motivate the students to read more recreationally.

Outcome Objectives

Over the period of implementation of this practicum, students engaged in various activities and strategies in the hope for positive gains of several terminal performance objectives. The outcome objectives for the target group were as follows:

1. Over the 12 week period, 60 percent of the students in the target group would show an increase in reading comprehension scores by 20 percent or more as measured by a difference in scores on a teacher-made pretest and post test (Appendix E:51).

2. After participation in the 12 week practicum project, 80 percent of the target group would exhibit a more positive attitude as evidenced by teacher observation and by comparing the results of a teacher-made attitudinal survey given both before and after the implementation period (Appendix F:64).

3. Seventy-five percent of the target group would demonstrate an increase in motivation and self-confidence to read by checking out and reading four or more books from the library during the course of the 12 week period. Implementation of entries in an independent, student-kept reading log and teacher observation were the means of measurement (Appendix G:67).

4. Over the period of 12 weeks, 50 percent of the target group would show a 25 percent increase in ability to use context clues as exhibited on a teacher-made pretest and post test using the cloze procedure (Appendix H:69).

5. During the 12 week implementation period, 50 percent of the students in the target group would show an increase in cognitive skills by 25 percent as determined by a teacher-made tally sheet which showed participation in class discussions which utilized higher order questioning strategies (Appendix I:72).

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Reading is a highly involved process. Learning to read is of chief significance to people in this age of upward mobility in a society coupled with increasing economic expectations. Micklos (1980) stated that the level of literacy needed to effectively function in society today has continued to climb as technology has moved forward. Because of this, it is more important than ever that students develop effective reading skills.

Degler (1978) defined reading comprehension as the ability to think about and mentally process what has been read. Reading material can be processed in a variety of ways. One can read and remember basic information. One can also take explicitly stated information and use it to make simple predictions or to infer cause and effect. Also, one can evaluate the information read, judging its worth or validity. Or finally, one can read information and respond personally, and then try to determine how the author's style of writing and use of language produced such a response. One might also respond in a creative manner

by generating fresh, personal ideas out of the reading material. McLain (1991) stated that the major goal of the reader is comprehension. The comprehension process involves the interaction of the contextual situation, the text, and the reader. Skilled, independent readers evolve as the reader's awareness of the comprehension process increases. Reading performance increases as comprehension becomes a more active part of the reading process.

Barton (1990) said that teachers can "engage students" by asking oral questions which foster hierarchical thinking. This type of questioning helps to strengthen the students' oral language as well as critical thinking skills which are foundational in comprehensive reading.

While comprehension is the process of getting meaning from the printed page, interpretation occurs when the reader goes beyond that literal meaning to add his own ideas and emotions. The two often overlap, and the first is usually a basis for the second. A person is not reading unless comprehension is involved. It is much more than merely recognizing words. Comprehension involves the association of words with oral language, relating thoughts to background experiences, then reacting in some way.

The population at this practicum site consisted mainly of minorities from low to middle income range. Chall (1990) did a study to learn more about the literacy and language achievement of children from low-income homes. The study consisted of students from below-average as well as above-average reading groups in each of the grades. The study concluded that low-income and middle-income children were quite similar in their reading development. The needs of low-income children were not essentially different from those of children from middle-class homes. The findings also suggested that a combination of structure, challenging and direct teaching, and practice in the reading of many books on a wide variety of topics in the middle grades would benefit the progress of these students in reading. Because the low-income child's family may not provide as much stimulation in language and literacy, the school must take on more of this responsibility. Chall concluded by reminding educators this is not a new responsibility because the schools have always been responsible for the teaching of language and literacy.

The issue of test fairness to racial and cultural minorities has received much attention over the years. According to Gronlund and Linn (1990), test publishers have taken steps to correct the situation by employing staff members representing various racial and cultural

minorities. These staff members have routinely reviewed achievement tests for content that might be biased or offensive to minority groups. In addition, statistical analysis has also been used to detect and remove biased test items.

According to Bergman (1991), decisions having great economic, educational, and individual impact are too often based on the results of test scores achieved during the course of a student's school experience. All across the nation, increasing numbers of school districts have turned considerable attention to these measures as the primary indicators of instructional effectiveness. Cook (1987) believed it is quite evident that standardized testing is well entrenched in current educational practices. He further implied that these tests have quickly become an important basis upon which the quality of American public education is being judged.

Students today have faced repeated standardized tests. Standardized tests are those which have been administered to many students to measure the level of achievement in various content and skill areas. Different kinds of tests have been given periodically to assess some aspect of academic development. The results of these tests influenced educational decisions regarding the students' future. Because of the

importance of these test results, it has become necessary to ensure that the test data were valid indicators of performance. Brown (1982) and Stewart and Green (1983) all agreed that many students lack test-wiseness. Many were unable to comprehend and implement directions given during test administrations or to answer questions in an effective manner. Because of this, the scores these students received were not valid indicators of capability or achievement.

Many studies on test-wiseness were completed in the sixties and seventies. Many of today's authors referred to those findings, leading the writer to infer that few test-wiseness studies have been implemented within the past 10 years.

It was of Koenke's (1988) opinion that the middle school, junior, or senior high schools were the logical places for test-wiseness training.

The research of Wahlstrom and Boersma (1968) found that eighth grade students exposed to a programmed text that dealt with test-wiseness had significantly greater scores on the verbal reading test of the Differential Aptitude Test than did students not exposed to the material. Fueyo (1977) recommended that a task-specific instructional unit to train skills for test-taking be initiated to assure that the score on a test is an accurate measure of the skill being assessed.

Richards (1989) agreed that reading achievement tests frequently misinform. His research showed that some good readers did very badly on certain parts, while some bad readers did very well.

Reading, as a skill, needs practice. Sadoski (1980) stated that students who read tend to become better readers, and the most beneficial way to develop reading ability is not through isolated skills drill or assessment, but by reading.

Heathington (1979) completed a study on 254 students in grades five through eight with a wide range of achievement levels, from both rural and urban schools, and from all socioeconomic levels. The findings indicated that the students' reading activities are greatly influenced by the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical changes associated with this age group. The students indicated that there was not enough time for reading, there were too many interruptions when reading, and expressed wishes to be able to select books according to individual interest.

This study highlights the fact that library periods, book talks, and plenty of time to read independently and recreationally were important facets to any reading program.

Of the literature and strategies reviewed, the majority of the authors advocated teaching test-wiseness and the benefits that could be derived from it. Brown (1982) stated that a program to develop study skills should be incorporated into any effort to enhance test-taking ability. Because of the importance attached to standardized test results, students should be prepared to do their best. Bergman (1991) also acknowledged that it is to the advantage of test-takers to be as learned about test-wiseness as possible. Furthermore, reading and study skills teachers appeared to be well qualified to play an important role in providing general instruction in how to read and take tests more effectively.

A student's ability to use characteristics of the test and the test-taking situation to an advantage is called test-wiseness. Berliner and Casanova (1986) explained that because test-wiseness existed independently of the knowledge a person has about a subject, these two characteristics need to be disentangled in order to evaluate our students and our instruction. When a person has scored low on achievement tests, it could mean that the person either had a low level of subject matter knowledge or that the person had a low level of test-wiseness.

Stewart and Green (1983) stated that teaching children how to take standardized tests has a positive effect upon their test performance. Gronlund and Linn (1990) stated that some students may not perform at the level of which they are capable because they lacked test-taking skills. Sarnacki (1979) suggested that all pupils should be given special training in test-taking skills to prevent inadequacies from lowering test scores. Campanile (1981) agreed that it is quite apparent that all students should be taught how to take tests.

Messick (1982) concurred that teaching test-wiseness would enhance test validity as well as reduce anxiety often associated with taking tests.

Teachers have been aware that the academic achievement of many students was hampered by ability to perform on tests. There was no doubt that the student's anxiety level increased during a test. For some students, it stimulated them to do better. Russo (1984) concurred that educators and counselors were well aware that a moderate amount of tension or anxiety could promote satisfactory performances. For others, however, the problem caused the student to become tense and nervous which interfered with the ability to perform to fullest capacity. Ellman (1981) noted that when students knew what to expect on tests, the more

likely the student was to take the examination confidently.

Berliner and Casanova (1986) agreed that familiarity with the test format and with the conventions of the test contributed to good performance. This was especially true for those who have had little or no experience with testing, such as recent immigrants. These authors further suggested working on timed tests to stimulate the timing of the formal testing situation. By helping students feel in control of the situation, there would be more freedom to concentrate on content knowledge.

The time limits imposed on standardized tests upset many students. Possible reasons for this anxiety might be due to a lack of experience with timed activities or to a poor self-concept of how much can actually be accomplished in a given period of time.

Effects of students' using time poorly have included the students' failure to complete the test, rushing through the test, or hastily jumping at the first answer for each question.

The teacher would be doing the students a justice by setting time limits under which they must complete a specified amount of work. Initially, give enough time to complete practice items, then decrease the time over subsequent practice sessions.

Students should also realize that very difficult questions should be skipped initially if the answer is not known. Rawl (1984) suggested that skipped questions should be marked very lightly on the answer sheet or recorded on a separate sheet of paper for rapid recognition upon returning to them. It should be stressed to the students the importance of checking the corresponding numbers on the test and the answer sheet so an answer was not accidentally placed in the wrong row.

The reading comprehension test is the most time consuming part of the verbal section. Rawl (1984) stated that when students are working on the comprehension section, instruction should be made to skim the questions before reading the passage in order to be alert for key phrases and points of emphasis. A study by Farr, Smitten, and Pritchard (1990) on what readers actually do when taking a test was conducted on a group of college seniors. After reading passages and answering questions on the Iowa Silent Reading Test, the seniors responded to interview questions about what thought processes, procedures, and strategies took place. Those who read the passages first encountered difficulties four times as often as those who read the questions first. These examinees also reported more difficulty with sustaining interest, lack of

familiarity with the material, making inferences, unfamiliar vocabulary, time constraints, and text anxiety.

Bower (1990) stated that students should answer the multiple-choice questions following reading comprehension passages without reading the passage since almost two-thirds of the questions asked do not tap into the test taker's comprehension of the passage.

Skimming a passage for relevant answers assists the reader to select what is needed without wasting time on irrelevant material. Students should be taught to look for key words or phrases when locating specific information.

Students need to learn how to infer the intent of questions and how to use deductive reasoning strategies such as crossing out all the responses that are totally inappropriate. Rawl (1984) stated that below-average students especially often did poorly on standardized tests because of either giving up on difficult questions or guessing wildly. If the student has understood how to guess wisely and has eliminated one or more of the possible responses, the odds would be in the student's favor of picking the correct answer.

Stewart and Green (1983) suggested that, in general, the student should identify and eliminate responses with the same meaning. All responses that

contained specific determiners such as all, always, or never should be eliminated. The student should be aware that the longest answer choice may be the correct one and that an answer choice may be correct if it contains words or phrases similar to those in the question stem. Students can and should be taught how to narrow the field of answers and make educated guesses.

A study by Gross (1975) involved a group of middle class eighth graders from a suburban junior high school who were exposed to formal instruction in test-taking. Among the conclusions reached was that educated guessing should not be discouraged when responding to standardized test questions.

Students should be aware that empty answer spaces are automatically counted as incorrect. A reasonable or educated guess is better than not answering at all.

Reading all the answer choices before choosing the "best" answer is another important skill to stress. If a student felt it was necessary to change an answer, further deliberation should be suggested before it happens. Koenke (1988) concurred that contrary to popular opinion students who thoughtfully changed answers to multiple choice questions were more likely to raise the test score than lower it on both standardized and teacher-made tests.

Reading in a smooth, flowing way and being able to quickly recognize words and phrases are both critical underlying factors for effective reading. Chall (1990) stated that wide reading is essential to the development of this fluency and automaticity. Collections of high quality literature and information books should be made available, particularly for lower socioeconomic students who may have fewer books at home than middle-class students. Time should be set aside for the use of such books, and the students should be encouraged to take the books home for reading.

Johnson (1991) stated that if students chose their own books, they would be more motivated to read them than those who had books chosen for them.

Many words in the English language often have had a number of different meanings. Lapp and Flood (1983) pointed out that because word meaning is often dependent on the context in which it is used, utilizing clues in the surrounding context is a necessary skill in recognizing and understanding unknown words. This is an integral part of the reading process. Miller (1982) indicated that students should be taught that contextual analysis is not just guessing at the meaning of unknown words, but it is a careful estimation of the meaning that demands inferential thinking on the part of the reader. When a student is being taught

contextual analysis, it is important to provide reading material on the independent reading level so it will not contain too many unknown words. Teaching students contextual analysis strategies would benefit the reader with an added possibility for decoding unknown words.

Lapp and Flood (1983) and Miller (1982) have provided a number of different classifications for context clues.

1. Look for the definition of the word within the context.
2. Look for a synonym to the unknown word in the sentence itself or in a nearby sentence to explain it.
3. An antonym is often provided as a word opposite in meaning to the unknown word.
4. A brief list of the qualities evoked by a word can provide a summary of clues that will help to clarify the meaning.
5. Similes using like or as can be used to make a comparison or an association to an unknown word.
6. Using examples to illustrate a word's meaning provides information about a new word.
7. An apposition, a statement that is equal in some way to the subject, can provide information that is needed to determine a word's meaning.
8. Grouping an unfamiliar word with other known words to depict similarities can also help the student recognize the meaning.

Miller (1982) suggested using the cloze procedure to determine a student's competency in contextual analysis. To formulate a cloze procedure for middle

school students, every fifth word is deleted from a written passage of about 250 words not counting proper nouns. The first and last sentences of the passage are kept intact. The student reads the passage and is encouraged to fill in every blank space with a word that makes sense in context. The author stated that although research has not yet established an exact level of competence, an 80 percent competency level was a good criterion for this procedure.

The goal of this practicum was to increase reading comprehension scores by implementing various skills and strategies of test-wiseness. An analysis of the strategies used to increase reading comprehension scores led the writer to choose an assortment of activities to achieve optimal results. A task specific instructional unit was employed to train for skills useful in test taking such as making an educated guess, skimming the questions before reading the passage, reading all answer choices before choosing the "best" answer, how to skim a passage for a key word or phrase, and skipping difficult questions for last. In addition, timed tests were utilized to help stimulate the timing of a formal testing situation and to help reduce student anxiety by helping the student feel more in control of the situation. Higher order cognitive skills were fostered through oral questioning

techniques during group discussions. Time to read independently and recreationally were encouraged by taking more trips to the library, giving book talks, and inviting adult role models to the classroom for storytelling and oral reading. This method was chosen to motivate students at this site to read more because, as mentioned earlier, the most beneficial way to increase reading skills and ability is by reading. Contextual analysis strategies were taught and practiced to aid the student in determining unknown word meanings.

CHAPTER III

Method

During the 12 week implementation period of this practicum, 16 targeted students met with the writer for 49 minutes each day. The assigned activities took place in various settings including the classroom, school media center, public library, and a computer lab located at the practicum site.

Week One: Students in the target population were identified and administered the teacher-made attitude survey. Students were also administered the teacher-made pretest to test comprehension skills in reading and a cloze procedure to check for knowledge of context clues. Student-kept reading logs were implemented as a means of monitoring recreational reading activities.

Week Two: Students were taught the process of how to skim for answers by looking for key words and phrases. Students visited the school media center where the media specialist did a book chat, showed a short video of the book, and allowed the students to check out books for recreational reading. The writer discussed the importance of timed readings at a general faculty meeting. Timed readings along with a planning

calendar were distributed to all science, social studies, and language arts teachers in the faculty to be utilized before the yearly Stanford Achievement Test was given.

Week Three: Students were taught the difference between skimming and scanning through a small group activity and discussion of results. Also, the skill of reading only the first and last paragraphs of a selection, then skimming to find the correct answer was demonstrated and practiced.

The teacher began the modeling process by orally reading a short story at least once a week to the students. In addition, other resource personnel (teachers, parents, administrators) were invited to participate in the modeling process as a means of motivating the students in the target group.

The class made a trip to the local public library where the students were given a tour of the facility and applied for library cards. The librarian also presented a demonstration of how computers were used in the library and showed students how to use the Info-Trac System to locate information.

Week Four: The various strategies of locating context clues for meaning of unknown words were discussed, demonstrated, and practiced. The class made

another trip to the school media center to check out books for recreational reading.

Week Five: Contextual analysis strategies were continued and emphasized by giving small groups current newspaper articles in which unknown words were highlighted then defined using the learned strategies.

The test-taking skill of making educated guesses to increase the chance of correctness was introduced. A 25 minute sustained silent reading time was initiated for recreational reading and implemented once or twice a week for the duration of the implementation period.

The school board chairman visited the school, discussed the importance of reading, and read a story over the school's television system to all language arts classes. Follow-up was conducted in individual classrooms following the presentation.

Week Six: The class made a return visit to the school library to obtain books for recreational reading. Stories from an eighth grade literature book were used to help stimulate higher order cognitive skills through teacher-directed questions and large group discussion periods. Questions were targeted toward the higher order cognitive skills of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The grade level administrator visited the classroom and discussed the importance of reading in

his life. Several books were shown by favorite authors followed by the reading of two short stories and a question and answer session.

Week Seven: Timed readings were initiated intermittently throughout the duration of the implementation period. The "Storytelling Lady" from the local public library system visited, stressed the importance of using the library and reading, and told several high-interest stories.

Week Eight: The teacher continued questioning strategies to stimulate higher order cognitive skills by using short stories and poems from the eighth grade literature book. An open-ended story was read to the class after which the students were given a writing assignment for practice in predicting outcomes. Follow-up and discussion were offered the following day.

Week Nine: Using various context clues to find the meaning of unknown words were reviewed and practiced along with the other test-taking skills aforementioned.

Students visited the school media center to check out books for recreational reading.

The school principal visited the classroom, discussed the importance of reading, and read a couple of chapters from a favorite book. Follow-up discussion

followed utilizing questions from the higher order of Bloom's taxonomy.

Week Ten: The test-taking skill of reading all the answer choices before choosing the "best" answer was discussed and practiced. Also, the process of skipping more difficult questions and returning to them later was emphasized.

Students were divided into small groups and made up positive slogans about reading. Each group printed out its slogan using a computer, decorated it with color, and hung it in either the library or cafeteria.

Week Eleven: A review of all contextual analysis strategies and all task-specific skills used in the test-wiseness training was reviewed and practiced.

A final trip to the school media center was made to check out books for recreational reading.

Week Twelve: Post testing on the attitudinal survey, the cloze test, and the reading comprehension test was completed and analyzed. Students handed in individual recreational reading logs for evaluation. Some students shared their favorite selections with classmates.

The writer had the sole responsibility of achieving the practicum objectives. There were no aides involved in the implementation of this process.

Volunteers were involved only in the capacity of serving as role models.

The data produced by this practicum was recorded in the writer's grade book, on a teacher-made tally sheet, in the writer's journal, on individual, student-kept reading logs, and in the writer's lesson plan book.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this chapter was to evaluate the results of this practicum implementation and report on the major findings. This investigation was done to assess and improve test scores in reading utilizing various test wiseness strategies. The activities included were implemented to develop a more positive attitude towards reading. The participants were a group of 16 eighth grade students with middle ranking stanine scores. This study was conducted during the spring semester of the 1991-1992 academic school year.

The objective of increasing student performance on a teacher-made, multiple-choice reading comprehension test by 20 percent or more in at least 60 percent of the students in the target group was not met (Appendix J:74). However, the group did average an increase of seven percent. Two of the students scored a negative gain. Student number eight was frequently absent from class due to illness. Student number 15 was absent the day the post test was administered and took it the following day as a make-up test while seated at the back of the room while normal classroom

activity was in progress. Eighty-eight percent of the students in the target group showed an increase in scores. The range of increase was two percent to 15 percent.

The teacher observed an overall more positive attitude being formed towards reading during the course of the practicum (Appendix K:76). From a total of 320 possible responses, there were 159 positive and 161 negative responses on the reading attitudinal pre-survey. There were 201 positive and 119 negative responses on the reading attitudinal post-survey. Questions number 4, 10, 17 and 20 were the most often changed (Appendix F:64). This indicates that the specific activities of sustained silent reading and more frequent trips to the library which took place during this practicum contributed to a more positive attitude toward reading. Questions number 8, 9, 12 and 14 remained unchanged in number of responses. The teacher feels this is due to the age level of the targeted students and the active lifestyle of the "typical teenager." Because of the unchanged response to question 14, the teacher would alter the question next time to "I would like to own more books, comic books, and magazines." The low socioeconomic status of many of the targeted students reflects the reason why many of them cannot own much reading material.

Seventy-five percent of the students in the target group read four or more books during the 12 week implementation period (Appendix L:78). The average number of books read was four. One hundred percent of the targeted students read at least two or more books each. Motivation to read was increased by the stimulating book chats and storytelling offered to the target group. The teacher observed that as the routine of more frequent library trips was established, the students' confidence to check out books and read them was improved.

The objective of increasing ability in the use of contextual analysis was met when 63 percent of the students in the target group showed an increase of 25 percent or more on the teacher-made cloze procedure post test (Appendix M:80). The range of increase was seven percent to 45 percent. This proves that teaching the use of basic techniques in contextual analysis with frequent review benefited the targeted students in determining the definition of unknown words.

Upon reviewing the teacher-made tally sheets for higher level cognitive thinking, the writer discovered that more students developed self-confidence in answering questions utilizing higher order questioning. One hundred percent of the targeted students became eager to participate in predicting outcomes of orally

read open-ended stories. Fewer participated in making inferences and interpreting figurative language in poetry. The teacher has frequently observed a lack of interest in poetry in the targeted students. Students readily answered questions concerning cause and effect, character traits, distinguishing fact from fiction, and fact from opinion. Individual evaluation of emotional reactions to characters and situation were also increased.

In conclusion, most of the objectives of this study were met. Although the targeted students did not show the expected increase in reading comprehension scores of 20 percent or more, 88 percent did show some degree of increase. The targeted students' overall attitude toward reading was made more positive, and motivation to read increased. Skill in determining the meaning of unknown words through contextual analysis was improved, and participation in class discussions utilizing higher order questioning strategies was increased.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Raising reading scores and encouraging students to read more has been a matter of great importance in the county in which this practicum was conducted. Because reading comprehension is the basis for success in school, the writer felt that much was needed to be done at the practicum site to raise consistently low reading comprehension scores on standardized achievement tests. It was necessary to ensure that the test data received from achievement tests were valid indicators of capability and achievement. The results of this implementation showed that when students became acquainted with various test wiseness strategies, test anxiety was overcome so that the students' performance increased to show more of what they were capable of. When the student was taught contextual analysis skills, critical thinking skills, and was given motivation to read more through positive role modeling, motivation to read also increased.

Test wiseness strategies from this practicum can be used and adapted to any grade level to improve reading comprehension test scores. Although 88 percent

of the targeted students showed an increase in score, the 12 week implementation period of this practicum was not sufficient to obtain optimum results. To receive maximum results, the writer suggests that test wiseness be an ongoing part of the curriculum with intermittent review and practice. The STP and teaming concepts which are in force at this practicum site lends itself well to a long range test wiseness program to allow for optimum student productivity. With the overall positive evaluation results, these strategies will become a part of the ongoing instructional techniques used in this writer's language arts and reading programs.

This study highlighted the fact that teaching contextual analysis strategies, using positive role models, and taking frequent trips to the library are necessary and beneficial in a setting which houses a large low socioeconomic and minority population. These students need much stimulation in language and more reading opportunities to develop fluency and automaticity. To enhance test validity as well as reduce anxiety, special training should be given in test taking skills to prevent inadequacies from lowering test scores.

The results of this practicum were communicated to the practicum observer. In addition, the writer also

discussed the strategies used and the benefits derived with colleagues in departmental meetings and team leader meetings. A copy of this practicum was placed in the professional library at the implementation site for the benefit of any interested educator. Innovative educators are always interested in successful projects that benefit the students.

The writer's final recommendations for the replication of this practicum are that a larger group of targeted students be used and the length of time be extended for completion of this study.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Annual Census

ANNUAL CENSUS

PERCENTAGE OF BEGINNING TEACHERS 9.1

REGULAR PROGRAM
PUPIL/TEACHER RATIO 23.1

AVERAGE YEARS TEACHING
IN FLORIDA 7

PERCENT OF TEACHERS NEW TO
THIS SCHOOL THIS YEAR 19.6

AVERAGE SALARY FOR
INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF $ 30,774.19

INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER	%
MASTERS DEGREE	17	27
SPECIALISTS DEGREE	1	2
DOCTORS DEGREE	1	2

TEACHER SALARY RANGE	NUMBER
$24,750-29,999	34
$30,000-34,999	8
$35,000-39,999	7
$40,000 AND OVER	6

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP 1989-90

	WHITE NON-HISPANIC		BLACK NON-HISPANIC		HISPANIC		ASIAN/AMERICAN INDIAN		TOTAL	% NOT PROMOTED	DROPOUT RATE
GRADE	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	1988-89	1988-89
6	67	16	126	30	217	52	4	1	414	4.0	
7	81	20	116	28	207	50	6	1	410	5.1	4.5
8	74	21	86	25	186	53	5	1	351	2.1	11.6
OTHER											
TOTAL	222	19	328	28	610	52	15	1	1175		

STUDENT AREA INFORMATION 1988-89

SUBJECT AREA	AVG. CLASS SIZE	#OF A.P. PUPILS	# OF ADV. PUPILS
MATH	25.7		57
SCIENCE	29.1		63
LANG.ARTS	28.0		
SOCIAL ST.	25.3		
FOREIGN LANG.	25.0		
ART	09.5		
MUSIC	31.1		
PHYSICAL ED	41.8		

APPENDIX B

SAT Test Scores 1988-1990

Stanford Achievement Test:

Along with classroom performance, student achievement is measured by how well the student performs on the Stanford Achievement Test. Schoolwide scores are one criteria used by teachers and counselors in making instructional decisions that will benefit students.

Median percentiles are those points which separate the distribution of scores into a top and bottom half. The national median percentile is 50. The following tables indicate School 1988, 1989 and 1990 Stanford Medians by grade level.

READING COMPREHENSION	1987-88 NUMBER TESTED	Q2	1988-1989 NUMBER TESTED	Q2	1989-1990 NUMBER TESTED	Q2
GRADE 6	312	32	328	28	317	30
GRADE 7	326	26	297	31	298	34
GRADE 8	320	34	310	31	298	34
MATHEMATIC COMPUTATION						
GRADE 6	306	40	328	44	317	47
GRADE 7	328	38	296	35	333	38
GRADE 8	323	42	308	40	297	39
MATHEMATICS APPLICATION						
GRADE 6	299	46	327	41	312	39
GRADE 7	316	37	293	41	331	34
GRADE 8	314	32	308	33	297	30

APPENDIX C

1990-91 SAT Statistical Compendium

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1990-91 STATISTICAL COMPENDIUM FOR STANFORD 8

READING COMPREHENSION

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	346	27
7	295	27
8	304	25

MATHEMATICS COMPUTATION

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	348	34
7	287	41
8	306	38

LANGUAGE MECHANICS

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	347	28
7	297	26
8	302	22

READING VOCABULARY/WORD READING

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	348	23
7	297	22
8	304	23

CONCEPTS OF NUMBER

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	347	27
7	295	36
8	305	26

SCIENCE

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6		
7		
8		

WORD STUDY

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6		
7		
8		

MATHEMATICS APPLICATIONS

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	346	27
7	289	34
8	304	26

SOCIAL SCIENCE

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6		
7		
8		

TOTAL READING

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	341	24
7	295	25
8	301	22

TOTAL MATHEMATICS

GRADE	COUNT	MEDIAN
6	340	29
7	286	36
8	300	30

APPENDIX D

Student Profile Stanford Achievement Test 1990-91

APPENDIX D

Student Profile Stanford Achievement Test 1990-91

Name	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Stanine
S-1	13	F	B	5
S-2	14	M	B	4
S-3	15	M	H	4
S-4	13	M	W	4
S-5	13	F	B	4
S-6	13	M	B	4
S-7	14	F	B	5
S-8	14	F	H	4
S-9	14	F	H	4
S-10	13	M	W	5
S-11	13	M	H	5
S-12	14	M	H	5
S-13	14	M	B	3
S-14	14	F	H	3
S-15	15	M	B	3
S-16	13	F	H	3

Sex Key

M = Male

F = Female

Ethnicity Key

B = Black

H = Hispanic

W = White

APPENDIX E

Reading Comprehension Pretest/Post Test

APPENDIX E

Reading Comprehension Pretest/Post Test

Directions: Read each passage silently, then choose the best answer to each question. Mark that answer on your answer sheet.

Dinosaurs were rulers of the earth millions of years ago. Less than 200 years ago, scientists began to discover evidence of these dinosaurs. They have since unearthed fossils of eggs, bones, and footprints of those enormous reptiles that once roamed the earth.

There were many different types of dinosaurs. Some lived in boggy swamps and shady forests, but others lived on flat plains and hot deserts. Most of them were plant eaters or herbivores, but some ate other dinosaurs. The biggest of these carnivores was Tyrannosaurus Rex. Its teeth were like sharp daggers, and its head was nearly four feet in length.

Other dinosaurs, however, were well equipped to defend themselves. Some had broad swinging tails, sharp horns, and heavy armor to protect themselves from Tyrannosaurus Rex. There were also certain duckbill dinosaurs with webbed feet that could quickly scramble into the water for protection because Tyrannosaurus Rex could not swim.

Paleontologists, scientists who study dinosaur fossils, have learned a great deal about these ancient animals. There is still much they don't know, such as how and why the last dinosaurs died. Perhaps someday they will know, or maybe it will always remain a mystery.

1. One unanswered question about dinosaurs is

   A when they roamed the Earth
   B where they lived
   C how they became extinct
   D what food they ate

2. Duckbill dinosaurs escaped the carnivores by

   A fighting back
   B flying into trees
   C swimming away
   D running away

3. What has helped scientists determine the size of dinosaurs?

   A ancient writings
   B pictures
   C teeth marks
   D footprints

4. What is the meaning of "carnivore" in this passage?

   A an enormous animal
   B one who eats plants
   C a hungry dinosaur
   D an animal who feeds on other animals

5. A paleontologist is one who

   A studies prehistoric times
   B studies carnivores
   C studies plant life
   D studies herbivores

6. Dinosaurs lived on the Earth

   A 200 years ago
   B 100,000 years ago
   C several million years ago
   D several hundred years ago

7. What is the main idea of this passage?

   A Dinosaurs were big eaters
   B Tyrannosaurus Rex was a carnivore
   C Living in prehistoric times was very dangerous
   D What we have learned about dinosaurs

Cindy Griner was living near Chicago on August 10, 1990. She was in her car on the way to the city when the chaos began. She never arrived. By 8:30 that morning, all motor traffic in and around Chicago stopped dead. The explanation was easy: there were more cars than the freeway could handle. It seemed as if everyone with any conceivable reason for visiting the city had decided to do so that day. The consequences were devastating. Subways stopped running, freeways overflowed, and buses and trucks added their bulk to the most massive traffic jam in history. It was a windless day, and more than 100 people died before 10:00 o'clock from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Chicago was not unique that day. In New York, emergency evacuation failed to save the lives of 3,000 school children caught in the city's worst smog alert ever. In Los Angeles, an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale flattened the downtown area in some three and a half minutes. Near Salt Lake City, Utah, an experimental U.S. Air Force rocket plane crashed while carrying a nuclear device in its hold. It immediately went off.

The upheaval that followed this day of chaos continued unchecked for 10 lengthy weeks.

8. Why did traffic stop in Chicago?

A There was heavy fog
B The heat made the engines stall
C There were too many automobiles for the highways
D The drivers died from carbon monoxide

9. What kind of a day was it in Chicago?

A very still
B very windy
C hot and humid
D dry and dusty

10. What was the danger in New York?

A fog
B smog
C an earthquake
D a nuclear explosion

11. Another word for chaos as used in this passage might be

A hot
B triumph
C disaster
D anticipation

A hush fell over the crowd as the spectators and judges waited in anticipation. The silence became deadening. Michelle pictured the way it would be: slow, calculated steps to the end of the board, the spring into the air, and the straight body turning forward two and a half times before knifing into the water below, fingertips first. Michelle had practiced the dive over and over for weeks and knew she had it. Everything was planned--the approach, the takeoff, the height she would reach before beginning to rotate her body back toward the board, the point at which she would turn from head-up to head-down, and the precise place where her fingertips would enter the water.

"Supposedly," Michelle said, "you work out enough to perfect it. But this time when I jumped off the board, I knew it was far too fast. I knew I would rotate too fast. I had to adjust in the air to keep from missing the dive completely. In order to slow the dive down I had to put my arms in the air early, to elongate myself and to slow the rotation."

In a split second, Michelle reacted to save the dive, extending her arms as an eagle spreads its wings to catch the air. But while she was concentrating on that, she was coming perilously close to the board. Abruptly she felt a stabbing pain in her left forearm. She had struck the board!

12. What happened on Michelle's dive?
    A Her form was perfect
    B She banged her head on the board
    C Her arms went over in the water
    D She started too quickly

13. How did Michelle feel before the dive?
    A confident
    B unconcerned
    C upset
    D unsure

14. What made Michelle hit the board?
    A She slipped and fell off
    B She was thinking too much about saving the dive
    C She hadn't practiced the dive enough
    D She turned too many times in the air

15. The word "point" as used in this passage means
    A a sharp end
    B the exact place
    C to direct the finger toward an object
    D to show distinctly

Many superstitions have grown up around numbers. "The third time is the charm!" "Thirteen is an unlucky number!" "You're as unlucky as a two dollar bill!"

Take the number seven, for example. Seven is a distinctive number that for hundreds of years has meant either good or bad luck. Superstition says that the seventh son in a family must be a doctor. Breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck.

There are so many beliefs concerning numbers that there is even a study of how numbers are supposed to influence a person's life. This study is called numerology, and those who give belief to numerology believe that there is truly magic in numbers.

16. A superstition is a belief
    A in all strange numbers
    B in the power of numbers
    C based on something unknown
    D based on knowledge

17. What is considered unlucky?
    A a one dollar bill
    B a two dollar bill
    C a seven dollar bill
    D a hundred dollar bill

18. A title for this passage might be
    A "Unlucky Number Seven"
    B "Magic Numbers"
    C "Lucky Number Seven"
    D "Number Superstitions"

19. What number can represent good and bad?
    A 2
    B 7
    C 5
    D 13

20. Which will make you a doctor?
    A receiving a charm
    B being a seventh son
    C breaking a mirror
    D studying numerology

21. Numerology is the study of
    A arithmetic and astrology
    B how numbers influence us
    C everyday superstitions
    D magic

Sunsets in Florida

When I get to be a poet,
I'm gonna write me some poems about
Sunsets in Florida
And I'm gonna put the prettiest lyrics in it
Rising off of the ground like a pink flamingo
And falling out of heaven like soft raindrops.
I'm gonna put some palm trees in it
And the scent of orange blossoms
And the smell of cut grass after rain
And long yellow necks
And hibiscus colored faces
And big brown arms
And the field daisy eyes
Of black and white brown white black people
And I'm gonna put black hands
And white hands and brown and red hands
And yellow clay earth hands in it
Touching everybody with gentle fingertips
And touching each other natural as rain
In that dusk of verse when I
Get to be a poet
And write about sunsets
In Florida.

22. What is this poem mostly about?
    A the Florida countryside
    B writing poetry about Florida
    C touching people with gentle fingertips
    D creating a work of art

23. In this poem, what is "falling out of heaven?"
    A lyrics
    B orange blossoms
    C leaves
    D raindrops

24. The poet refers to the smell of
    A orange blossoms
    B soft raindrops
    C fingertips
    D palm trees

25. What does "touching everybody with gentle fingertips" mean?
    A shaking hands with neighbors
    B allowing everyone to write poetry
    C modeling with yellow clay
    D sharing love among all people

26. The poet compares people to
    A palm trees
    B the earth
    C the hibiscus
    D the mist

For thousands of years people have wanted wings that would allow them to soar above the clouds like birds. This desire has inspired the innovative and popular pastime of hang gliding.

The hang glider is a simple apparatus made of aluminum tubing connected to a gigantic diamond-shaped kite or sail about 18 feet across. Metal wires attach the fabric to more aluminum tubing shaped like a triangle. The bottom of the triangle is the control bar. The operator hangs onto this and maneuvers the vehicle by a strap seat.

The glider is steered by shifting the body weight. To turn left, you would lean your body to the left, holding the bar securely. To go right, you would pull right.

Wind, of course, is necessary for hang gliding. While learning to fly, the novice glider must learn to use a wind meter which shows wind direction and speed. In order to soar, the glider must go into the wind rather than with it.

There were many accidents when this pastime was very new, so hang gliding developed a reputation for being very treacherous. Most accidents, however, were not due to weaknesses in the glider, but to the carelessness of the operator. Like any new sport you might attempt, it is wise to get proper instruction so that you will get the most enjoyment possible from the activity.

27. How is the hang glider steered?

A by pulling a metal tube
B by shifting body weight
C by turning a metal wire
D by lowering the wings

28. To soar with a hang glider you must go

A behind the wind
B into the wind
C over the ocean
D off a mountain

29. What is the shape of the glider kite?

A triangle
B tube
C square
D diamond

30. What must a novice learn to use in hang gliding?

A a speedometer
B an altimeter
C a barometer
D a wind meter

31. Most early hang gliding accidents were caused by the

A carelessness of the operator
B weakness of the glider
C carelessness of the glider
D weakness of the operator

32. What is the frame of the glider made of?

A fabric
B canvas
C steel
D aluminum

33. What is the meaning of "novice" from the way it is used in this passage?

A an athlete
B a beginner
C something with wings
D an experienced pilot

"Tara had been training with us for only 12 days," Scotty recalled, "but I decided to enter her in a two-mile run, just to give her some competitive experience. Of course, she wasn't really in condition, and I knew it. So I said to her before the race, 'Don't go out too quickly, stay with the pack, and just try to finish.'

"Well, the gun went off, and before I knew it, Tara was a hundred feet in front of the whole field and running madly. I said to myself, 'My gosh, this girl is going to pass out!' But she just kept running. Then, with about 50 yards to go, the oxygen debt really hit her, and she just about collapsed. She fell down, then got up and started crawling on her hands and knees. It was astounding! She stood up, staggered some more, got about 10 yards from the finish line, and fell again. She kept on going, crawling, still with nobody near her. Then, right at the wire, another girl caught up and won.

"Tara cried like a hurt puppy. I went over, picked her up, and tried to comfort her. I explained to her that she had nothing to be ashamed of. But she just cried. I knew, at that moment, that this girl was going to be something spectacular. I had never seen anything like that before in my whole life."

34. How long had Tara been training?
    A all year
    B one month
    C two weeks
    D 12 days

35. What kind of race did she enter?
    A a one-mile run
    B a 100-yard dash
    C a half-mile run
    D a two-mile run

36. What made Tara collapse?
    A She tripped
    B She bumped another runner
    C She got hit
    D She had an oxygen debt

37. According to the way it is used in this passage, "staggered" means
    A a way of running
    B breathing heavily
    C a swaying of the body
    D to pass out

At last, dawn came. The Spaniards, the early morning light glinting on their swords and spears, advanced up the ramp. Smoke rose from behind the walls of the fortress, and the soldiers could see a blaze. The flames seemed to have spread.

They swiftly put their planks down and moved into the fortress. They squeezed through the breach in Castile's stone wall and darted past the charred remnants of the wooden wall of the Partisans. Inside the walls, they quickly reassembled and advanced again.

But no opposing rebels attacked them. They saw not a single warrior. They heard nothing but the crackle of flames. Every building within the fortress seemed to be burning. Smoke clouded everything. Where were the Partisans hiding?

The Spaniards hesitated. Then, thinking to draw the defenders out of their hiding places, they gave a majestic shout, all of them at once, like a battle cry.

The echoes died away gradually. Majorca lay in silence again. The stillness was broken only by the low crackling of the flames and the uneasy shuffling of the bewildered Spanish soldiers. Otherwise, there was nothing.

38. What did the Spaniards find inside the walls?

A the Partisans
B only fire and smoke
C stone and wood
D the stillness of midday

39. What made the Spaniards shout?

A the crackle of flames
B the sight of the Partisans
C the lashing of flames from the buildings
D the desire to draw out the defenders

40. Where did the Spaniards enter the fortress?

A up the drawbridge ramp
B over the north wall
C under the wooden wall of the fortress
D through the breach in Castile's wall

The majority of people would probably agree that penicillin was the most prized medicine discovered during the first half of this century. Sir Alexander Fleming was the observant scientist who unintentionally discovered this disease-curing drug in 1928. Although penicillin is not effective against all diseases, it has a dramatic impact on some. Pneumonia, a serious lung infection, was once a leading cause of death. The discovery of penicillin, however, has greatly lowered the death rate for this disease.

Most people find it difficult to accept that the minute green penicillin mold can play such a vital role in modern medical science. Fortunately, Fleming comprehended the significance of the mold, and the world has been taking advantage of his wisdom ever since.

41. After penicillin was introduced as a treatment for certain diseases

A Fleming said that penicillin did not have a great impact
B death rates for the diseases decreased
C occurrences of pneumonia increased
D doctors discovered that penicillin was a mold

42. According to the passage, which statement is true?

A Most diseases can be cured easily
B Pneumonia can cause the infection of molds
C Anyone can be famous with a lot of luck
D A tiny mold can have great value

43. Which word best describes Fleming's work habits?

A perplexed
B reckless
C thorough
D ineffective

At some time in their life, almost everyone in the United States has taken part in the Halloween custom of using a disguise.

Sometimes, masks are placed over the face to conceal a person's features.

Masks have many purposes. Some are grotesque and are meant to frighten by portraying demons or brutal forces. Others are most realistic and show human or animal faces. In some plays, brightly colored masks are used to dramatize the emotions of a character. Some masks are used in ceremonies to retell past events or to invoke spiritual assistance. And in some cultures, death masks are believed to protect the deceased from evil glances.

44. What does "grotesque" mean?

A Brightly colored
B Like an animal
C Wild looking
D Painted with features

45. What does "dramatize" mean?

A Present a show or play
B Present in a forceful or emotional way
C Cover up with colored cloth
D Make as bright as possible

46. The main idea of this passage is that masks

A are usually colorful
B are used for many reasons
C are normally frightening
D help people invoke spiritual assistance

APPENDIX F

Reading Attitudinal Survey

APPENDIX F

Reading Attitudinal Survey

Directions: This is a survey that will show how you feel about reading. Put an X on the line beneath the response that represents your feelings about the statement.

Yes	No		
___	___	1.	Reading is an important part of my life. I read almost every day from books, newspapers, or magazines.
___	___	2.	I only read when my teacher or parents say I have to.
___	___	3.	When I go to the library, I usually check out at least one book.
___	___	4.	Magazines and newspapers do not interest me.
___	___	5.	I enjoy buying books when I go to the store.
___	___	6.	Reading is boring.
___	___	7.	After seeing a story on TV or at the movies, I often feel it would be interesting to read about it in a book.
___	___	8.	I never want to read on weekends or during any school vacations.
___	___	9.	Books make good gifts to give or receive.
___	___	10.	The only time I read is when the teacher assigns a book report.
___	___	11.	I enjoy visiting the library to find books.
___	___	12.	Reading makes me feel tired because I'm not very good at it.
___	___	13.	I like to read a magazine in my spare time.

Yes	No		
___	___	14.	I do not own very many books, comic books, or magazines.
___	___	15.	Sometimes I like to read articles or books about something that was discussed at school.
___	___	16.	Most books in the library are too hard for me to read.
___	___	17.	If I had more free time, I would enjoy reading more.
___	___	18.	Reading is not a good way to learn new things.
___	___	19.	Reading is an enjoyable activity.
___	___	20.	I have not checked out any books from the library this year.

APPENDIX G

Individual Reading Log

APPENDIX G

Individual Reading Log

Title of Book	Author	Number of Pages	Date Completed	Personal Reaction
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

APPENDIX H

Cloze Procedure

APPENDIX H

Cloze Procedure

Directions: Read this passage silently. Write a word that makes sense in each blank. When you have completed the passage, reread it to be sure that it is correct.

Mining Companies Take Over

At first, gold mining had been pretty much an individual enterprise. A lone prospector would _____ a claim near a _____. He scooped buckets of _____ from the stream bed _____ from the banks of _____ stream. Using water from _____ stream, he flushed the _____ of the buckets over _____ bottom of a pan _____ through a trough called _____ sluice. Particles of gold, _____ heavy, would sink to _____ bottom, while the water _____ away the dirt. This _____ was known as placer mining.

_____ mining required long _____ of hard, monotonous work. _____ single prospector might _____ for weeks to get _____ few ounces of "gold" _____"--or he might find _____ of the precious stuff _____ all. Still, this method _____ its advantages. It required

_____ simple tools and little _____. And, if the lone _____ was lucky, he need _____ his good fortune with _____ one.

Individual placer mining, _____, was a passing phase _____ the mining industry. Loose _____ found in or near _____ was only a small _____ of the precious metal _____ the Last West. Richer _____ more plentiful gold ore _____ imbedded in rock formations. _____ it took many workers _____ costly rock-crushing equipment _____ extract the gold from _____ rock.

From Colorado and Nevada _____ mining frontier spread into _____ northern Rockies. Then mining _____ moved in to take _____ the most promising claims in this region. Only the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory remained as a place in which the lone prospector had a chance to make a strike.

APPENDIX I

Teacher Tally Sheet for Higher Level Cognitive Thinking

APPENDIX I

Teacher Tally Sheet for Higher Level Cognitive Thinking

Student	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
S-1				
S-2				
S-3				
S-4				
S-5				
S-6				
S-7				
S-8				
S-9				
S-10				
S-11				
S-12				
S-13				
S-14				
S-15				
S-16				

Application: infer details, main ideas, sequence, comparisons, cause and effect, character traits.

Analysis: predict outcomes, distinguish fact from fiction, how things are related.

Synthesis: interpret figurative language, motives.

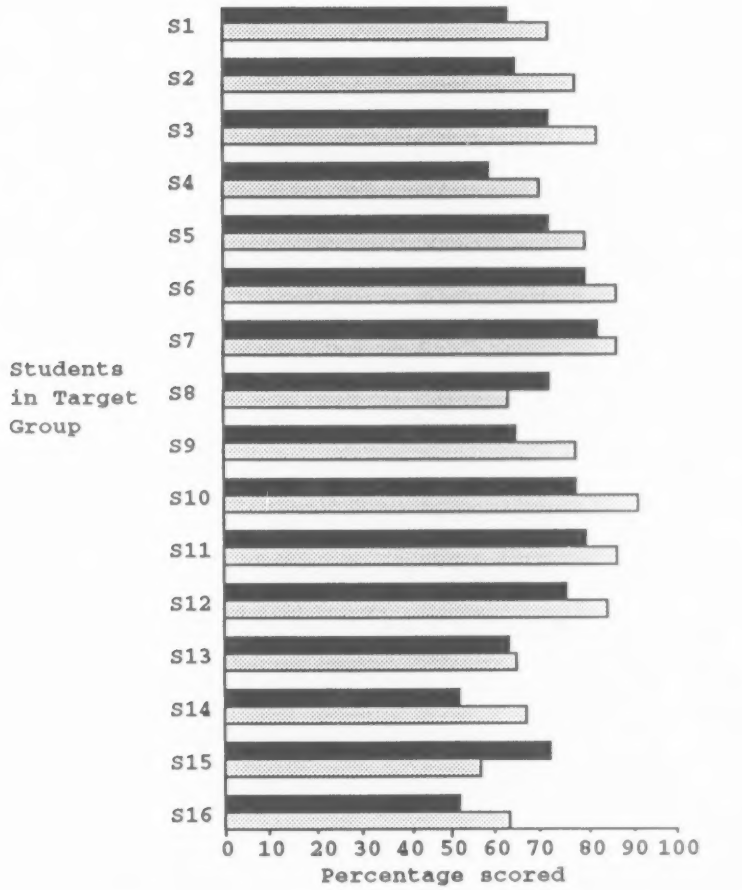
Evaluation: make judgements, detect fallacies, reality or fantasy, fact or opinion, value, detect propaganda and stereotype, emotional reaction.

APPENDIX J

Reading Comprehension Pretest/ Post Test Results

APPENDIX J

Reading Comprehension Pretest/ Post Test Results



Mean	69%	76%
Median	72%	78%
Mode	72%	87%

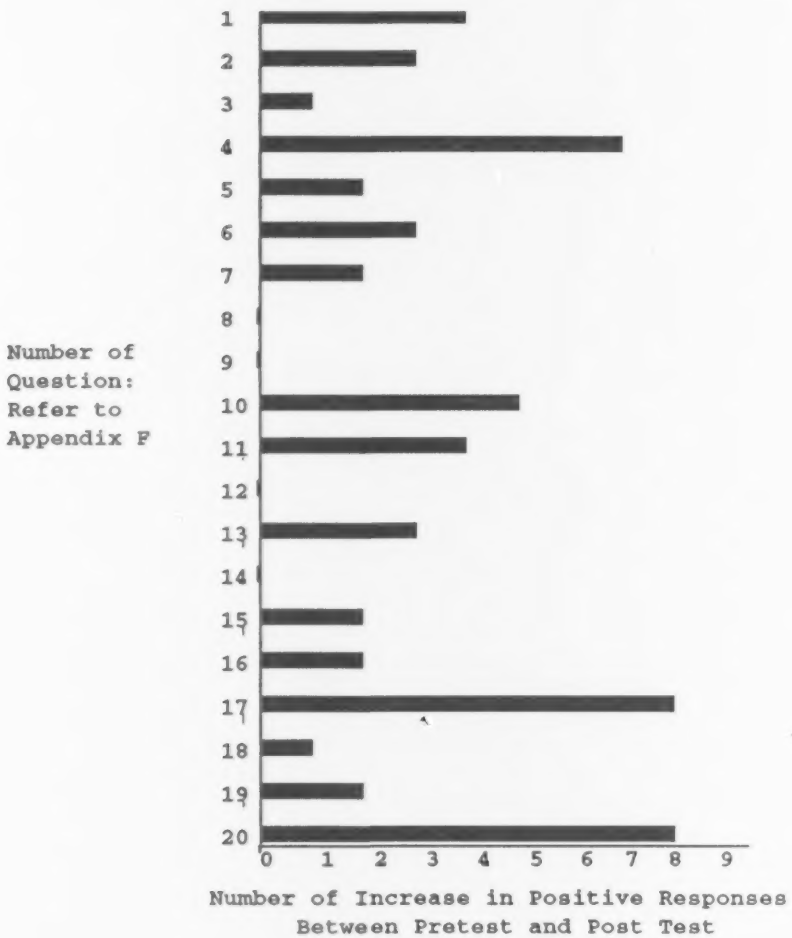
APPENDIX K

Increase in Number of Positive Responses

on Reading Attitudinal Post Survey

APPENDIX K

Increase in Number of Positive Responses on Reading Attitudinal Post Survey

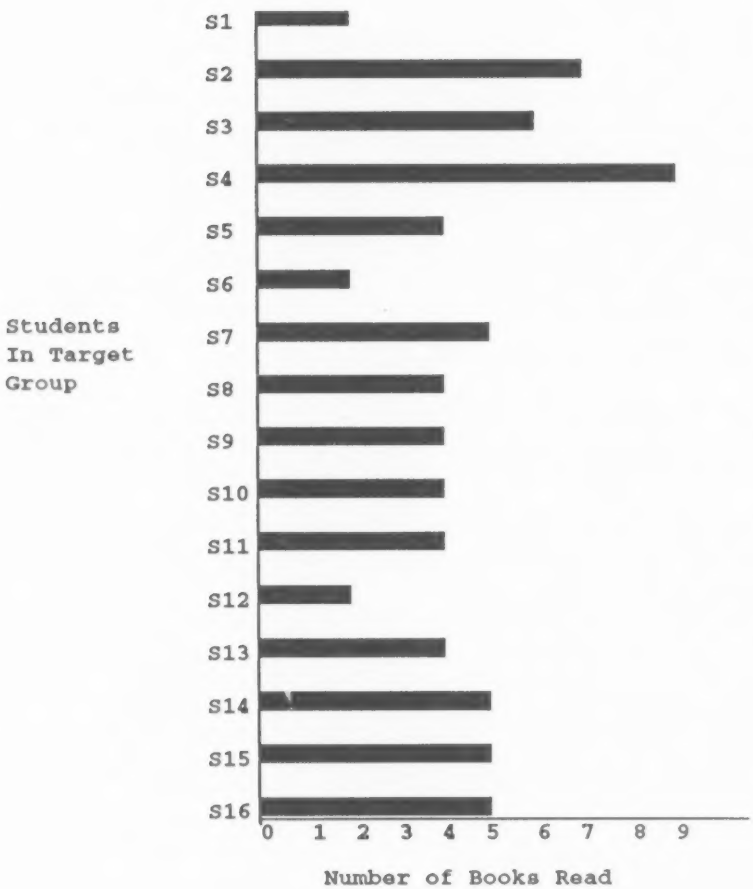


APPENDIX L

Number of Books Read During Twelve Week Implementation Period

APPENDIX L

Number of Books Read During Twelve Week Implementation Period

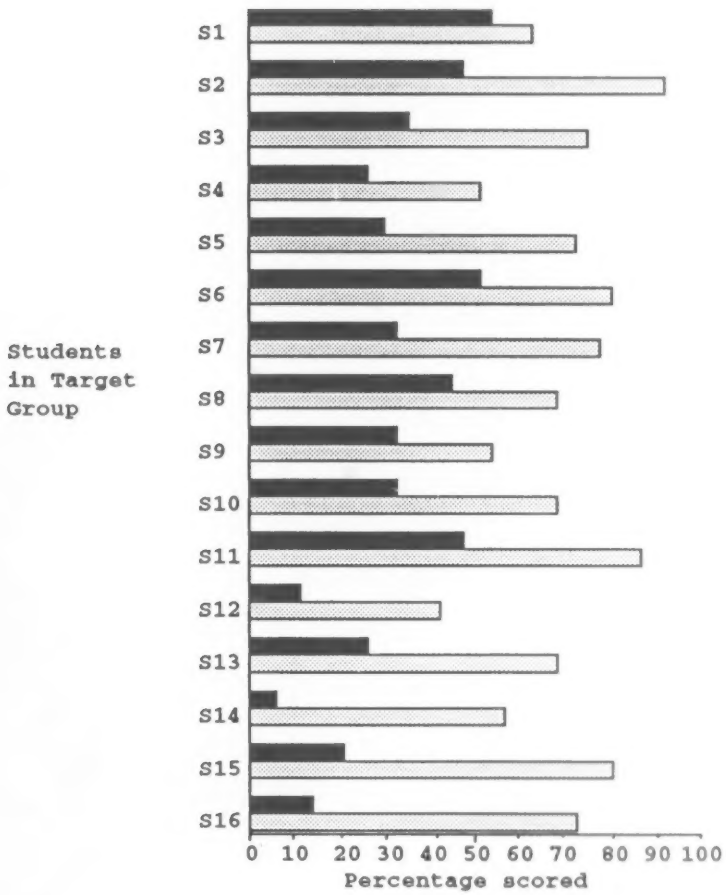


APPENDIX M

Cloze Procedure Pretest/ Post Test Results

APPENDIX M

Cloze Procedure Pretest/
Post Test Results



Key	Pretest	Post Test
Mean	25%	53%
Median	25%	55%
Mode	25%	52%